Gerald Horne, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in Seventeenth-Century North America and the Caribbean*. New York: Monthly Review, 2018. 239 pp. (Paper US$ 25.00)

This latest work by Gerald Horne, born January 3, 1949 and still producing history monographs at a rate of knots, inspired me to wonder why he is not better known in Britain. One reason might be that he is African American and a professor of African American History. Britain—maybe Europe in general—looked across the Atlantic and patronized former colonies experiencing their troubled relationship with Jim Crow, sharecropping, lynching, the Klan, chain-gangs, the need for freedom marches and civil rights' campaigns, gang warfare, crime, guns, and ghettos. Frankly, its complacency is horrifying. In the meantime, the United States in particular has been gradually developing an inclusive way of discussing its slave past and incorporating it into a way of thinking about the heritage of every American, irrespective of color. In September 2016 the first black chief executive of the United States of America dedicated the new Smithsonian museum devoted to African American History and Culture with the words of Missouri poet, Langston Hughes, "I, too, am America," and reminded his country that there were not two parallel Americas, or several separate Americas—that African Americans were not a counterpoint to a more "mainstream" American history, but rather central and integral to it. And now, nearly three years later, we stare back across the pond, open-mouthed and (in this case) weeping at what has become of that sense of inclusive optimism.

The second reason may be that Horne has seen the nature of the discipline move away from him. Openly Marxist interpretations are rare animals now. When was the last time that a book's very first reference was to Christopher Hill? And the very range of Horne's interests and publications—something that used to be a source of admiration and a sign of a scholar whose ideas and interpretations were worth listening to—are, in this postrevisionist world, inclined to dissipate influence rather than encourage it. This book is in some sense the farthest that Horne has ventured back into America's history. (And only two of his books, on African American involvement in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century, took him back from the twentieth century.) *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism* is, therefore, a timely anachronism, if you'll pardon the oxymoron.

What I particularly applaud about this study is that it ties slavery in its particularly early-modern Anglophone form together with an approach to society, law, government, and administration that was based on the color of one's skin, and places that at the origin of British colonialism in the Americas. No mealy-mouthed timelines in which ignorant and hapless Britons "fell into" a trade in

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black lives and a dependence on chattel labor because they needed economies of scale, or cash crops, or to recover the home economy after a civil-war collapse. Now, archival study is starting to catch up with these straightforward assertions of Horne and others. Rather than being an economic imperative to engineer the plantation economy, slavery was always present in the Caribbean and American colonies. The archives are now starting to demonstrate that it was a means for home governments and their agents (local administrators and merchants with royal favor) to seize and maintain power, because they had access to a source of scarce and immensely valuable labor that was outside the access of the powerless. Connections with the Guinea Company, East India Companies, and others could supply a human cargo along with other commodities and opportunities for profit, which in itself buttressed the merchant class in power in the Americas, even while they were the least committed to settling the Americas with idealized European-style communities. Horne is also keeping pace with current polyphonic studies, exploring not only English-speaking colonialists but also interactions with the Spanish in Providence Island and Jamaica, as well as the Dutch on the mainland and to a lesser extent Suriname (the importance of which Horne tends to underplay) and the French (primarily with a focus on the Williamite wars, though the rivalry with the French was ever-present).

For me, the overblown language jars. The title *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism* would have made the point by itself. The rhetoric can get didactic and, in the end, make one feel like being hit over the head. The argument is, of itself, forceful and irrefutable: if anything, overegging it tends to detract rather than emphasize. But there is still a message that needs to get out there, as loudly and as oft-repeated as possible. Writing "accessible" history is never easy, and this is a laudable addition.

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